



THIS WEEK IN IRAQ

The Official Newsletter of the Multi-National Force - Iraq

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February 18, 2008

Iraqis Graduate Combat Training

BESMAYA — A graduation ceremony filled with music, marching and speeches marked a tremendous step for Iraq when the Iraqi Army's 3rd Brigade, 14th Division graduated here, Feb 13.

The brigade is fully equipped and trained to battle enemies of Iraq because of 'Unit Set Fielding', a process that takes an entire Army brigade and gives the Soldiers the equipment and training they will need to fight.

Iraqi Army Gen. Babakir, commanding general and chief of staff, Iraqi Joint Forces, attended the event and delivered a compelling speech to the graduates of the brigade.

"I am proud to stand before you on this great day," said Babakir. "The people of Basra will be proud to have you secure their future."

The commanding officer of Iraqi Army 3rd Brigade, 14th Division, Col. Hussein, spoke of the training received from the Besmaya combat training center.

"We are happy to come to Besmaya for training," said Hussein.

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Members of the Iraqi Army's 3rd Brigade, 14th Division participate in a pass and review for Iraqi and Coalition military members attending the Combat Training Center graduation ceremony, Feb. 13, 2008. Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Erica R. Gardner.

This Week in News ...

[Standing Together after Terrorist Attack](#)

[Wheelchair Given to Iraqi Boy](#)



Press Conference: Ops Update, Rear Adm. Smith, Feb. 17

Reconstruction Report: The latest from USACE

Photo Gallery: Featuring the Military's best Photographers

'Sons of Iraq' Keep Residents Safe, Secure

QAHIRA — 'Sons of Iraq' (Sol) in the northern Baghdad neighborhood of Qahira play a large role in securing their backyard through local checkpoints.

Lt. Col Michael Pemrick, a Greenwich, N.Y., native, who serves as deputy commander for 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division — Baghdad, said these local forces are one of the key elements in the recent reduction of violence in the area.

Sol is a splinter group of the highly successful Concerned Local Citizens program rooted throughout Iraq. Program members have proven themselves invaluable to

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On the Air: Radio Station Opens in Wehida

FOB HAMMER — Soldiers and leaders of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team attended the opening ceremony of a radio station in Wehida, Iraq, last week.

Maj. Nathan Haas, 3rd HBCT information operations officer, said the idea for the station came from 3rd HBCT Commander, Col. Wayne W. Grigsby, Jr., last December.

Haas contacted Ahmed Sabir, station manager for Peace 106, a radio station out of FOB Rustamayah, near Baghdad, to put the project in motion. Haas said Sabir was the perfect candidate for the job.

Sabir has trained Iraqis in radio station operations, speaks English fluently and has four years experience working for Peace 106. Sabir hired a local contractor, Matham, as the new station operator.

"We were looking for a way to get accurate information out quickly," Haas said. "It was difficult with newspapers being distributed once a week and the low literacy rates; it's about

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Adwaniyah children enjoy candy while waving to the camera. Coalition forces and local leaders have worked hard to establish trust within the community and improve the security and economic situation for the town. Photo by 3rd Infantry Division Public Affairs.

Citizens Look to Bright Future

FOB KALSU — Last year, the community of Adwaniyah witnessed the worst of what the insurgency brought to the people of Iraq.

There were reports of kidnappings and murders. Members of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) were said to have forced residents out of their homes. Soon, Adwaniyah residents realized that life under AQI would be a step backward and they began to work with Coalition forces to rid their community of AQI.

Adwaniyah citizens Hazim Shaker Ahmen and Riyah Yas Khudayr, both former Iraqi Army officers, began working with Coalition forces and started 'Sons of Iraq' (SoI) programs last October.

In mid-November AQI mounted an offensive against U.S. Soldiers, Iraqi Army and Sons of Iraq. At the time, Troop B,

1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division was the Army unit patrolling Adwaniyah.

Troop B and the SoI repelled the offensive and since then AQI members have either been detained or fled the community.

Now, Troop B, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. controls the battle space and the future of Adwaniyah is bright.

"The local leadership, the Sons of Iraq and Iraqi Army all played an important part in making this a success and they continue to do so," said Capt. Douglas Hoyt, Troop B, 6-8th Cav. Regt. commander, from Columbus, Ohio.

"The willingness to make a stand, to

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Moments in Time: Still Images of a People, Land and Culture

